DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 238 654 RC 014 531

AUTHOR	Beaulieu, Lionel J.; Voth, Donald E.
TITLE	A Review and Critique of Rural Development Research in the Land-Grant System Since 1970--with Focus upon the South. SRDC Series 65.
INSTITUTION	Southern Rural Development Center, Mississippi State, Miss.
SPONS AGENCY	Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Extension Service, Jackson.
PUB DATE	Jan 84
GRANT	80-CRSR-2-0627
NOTE	35p.; Revision of a paper presented at the Rural Development Conference (Atlanta, GA, September 26-27, 1982).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Agriculture; Community Development; Community Services; Cooperation; Energy; Federal State Relationship; Financial Support; Health Needs; Higher Education; Human Resources; Industrialization; Inflation (Economics); Institutional Role; Job Development; Labor Market; *Land Grant Universities; Local Government; Needs Assessment; *Research; *Research Needs; Rural Areas; *Rural Development; Water Resources; Youth
IDENTIFIERS	Impact; New Federalism; *United States (South)

ABSTRACT

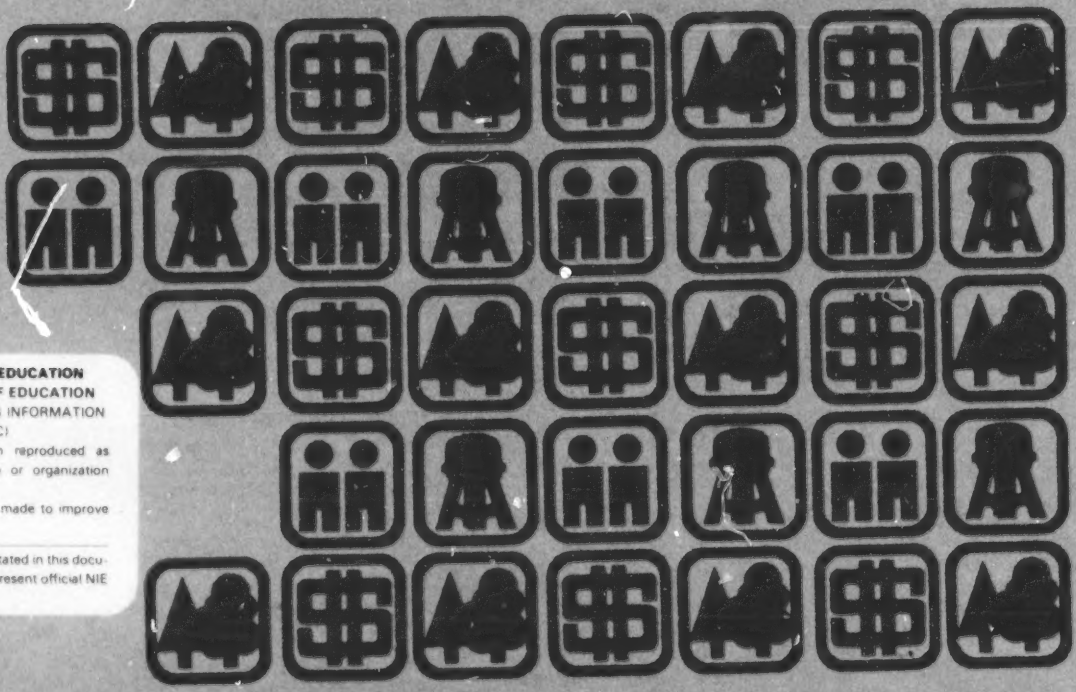
An overview of rural development research in the United States Department of Agriculture's land grant environment focuses on southern 1862 and 1890 institutions. Although important to agricultural experiment stations, rural development research has received limited funding. A heterogeneous research program including human resources development, economic development, community facilities and services, environmental improvement, family and youth, natural resources and recreation, population, and small farms has received less than 5% of available resources. Further, rural development research is characterized by small commitments from relatively few people. Nevertheless, significant achievements have been made in several areas including documentation of rural conditions, rural industrialization and job development, community services and local government finance, rural youth and youth in agriculture, and needs assessments. Rural development research must balance the priorities of both the research community and the public. While little information about public priorities is available, researchers are apparently focusing on five research issues: the impact of growth and development on demand for and cost of services, water resources, health care, the impact of energy shortages and inflation, and the rural labor market. Trends in rural development research include collaboration, evaluation and estimation of program impacts, and implications of "New Federalism." (SB)

ED238654

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
W. Linder
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

JAN1984
RECEIVED
ERIC/CRESS

Southern Rural Development Research in the Land-Grant System Since 1970



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

SOUTHERN RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER
BOX 5406 • MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY • MISSISSIPPI STATE, MS 39762

RC014531

ABSTRACT

The land-grant system functions as a primary stimulator of rural development research in the United States. This paper presents a broad overview of rural development research within the land-grant environment, focusing primarily upon 1862 and 1890 institutions in the South. Several key aspects of the rural development research enterprise are discussed, including the institutional context in which RD research is undertaken, past and current rural development research successes, and emerging directions in the RD research agenda. General recommendations about the land-grant system's rural development research activities are offered.

A REVIEW AND CRITIQUE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH IN THE LAND-GRANT SYSTEM SINCE 1970 — WITH FOCUS UPON THE SOUTH

Lionel J. Beaulieu
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences
University of Florida

Donald E. Voth
Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology
University of Arkansas

Revision of a paper initially prepared for the Rural Development Conference, Airport Marriott Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia, September 26-27, 1982. Sponsored by the Task Force on Historically Black Colleges and Universities of the Office of Rural Development Policy, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and hosted by the Human Resources Development Center, Tuskegee Institute. Published by the Southern Rural Development Center under a cooperative research agreement with SEA-Cooperative Research of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Funds were administered under P.L. 89-106, Grant Number 80-CRSR-2-0627 through the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, Dr. R. Rodney Foil, Director.

CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES	v
INTRODUCTION	1
THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ENTERPRISE	2
Overall Commitment to Rural Development Research	3
Rural Development Research in the South: Past and Present	5
SELECTED RURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS	9
Documenting Rural Conditions	9
Rural Industrialization and Job Development	10
Community Services and Local Government Finance	11
Community Development Process	12
Small Farms	13
Studies of Rural Youth and Youth in Agriculture	14
Needs Assessment	15
EMERGING RURAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES	17
Rural Development Research Priorities	17
Important New Research Directions	20
(1) Collaborative Research	20
(2) Evaluation and Estimation of Program Impacts	21
(3) Implications of the "New Federalism"	21
GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	22
REFERENCES	25

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Page

FIGURE 1 — Annual Allocation to Southern States Under Title V of the Rural Development Act of 1972 for Research and Extension Efforts..... 4

TABLE 1 — Summary of Rural Development Research at 1862 and 1890 Land-Grant Institutions in the South, by Subject Matter Area, Fiscal Years 1973 and 1977..... 6

TABLE 2 — Summary of Regular and Regional Hatch Supported Rural Development Research Projects at 1862 Land-Grant Institutions in the South, by Subject Matter Area, Fiscal Year 1981..... 8

TABLE 3 — Rural Development Research Priorities of Southern Researchers (n=104)..... 18

INTRODUCTION

The United States Department of Agriculture, with its constituent and cooperating agencies, has served since its inception as the primary policy making agency and delivery system for rural development (RD) programs and policies in the United States. This is not to slight the important contributions made by other governmental agencies (e.g., Department of Commerce, Department of Housing and Urban Development) and private sector organizations (e.g., Rural America, Inc., National Rural Center, Country Life Commission, Farm Foundation). However, the USDA has consistently held the position of advocate for rural farm areas and has received the bulk of resources designated specifically to achieve rural development.

A critical component of the RD mission of the USDA has been the research carried out within its land-grant system. The purpose of this paper is to provide a broad overview of RD research in the land-grant environment, focusing primarily upon the 1862 and 1890 institutions in the South. The objective throughout is to draw out characteristics of the RD research enterprise that the authors feel are significant for the advancement of rural development and a RD research strategy for the future.

THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ENTERPRISE

RD research is multi-faceted in terms of the problems and issues that it seeks to scientifically examine and with respect to the various environments under which it commonly operates. As previously noted, RD research does not function solely within the land-grant system (Brown, 1982, p. 275) for important contributions to the body of knowledge on rural development have been and continue to be made by agencies and organizations outside this environment. Important concerns relevant to rural America are being addressed by the Economic Research Service, particularly its Economic Development Division (EDD). Currently, EDD constitutes the largest single research organization focusing on rural development in the United States (Brown, 1982, p. 275).

Essential activities in support of land-grant RD research are also being carried out by four regional centers. The Southern Rural Development Center, located at Mississippi State University, represents an important institution facilitating regional research activities in the South.

There is little doubt, however, that the cornerstone of rural development research continues to be the state agricultural experiment stations. The combination of state and Federal appropriations has accorded 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions an opportunity to establish a rural development research record within their states. Moreover, the availability of regional research funds has served as a catalyst to the establishment of regional technical committees. These committees have represented important vehicles for the pursuit of RD research of regional significance.[1]

---

[1] See Dunkelberger and Vanlandingham (1974) for a discussion of the origins of regional Rural Sociology research in the South, and especially the origins of the Southern Rural Sociology Research Committee, which has played a crucial role in fostering Southern regional rural development research.

Overall Commitment to Rural Development Research

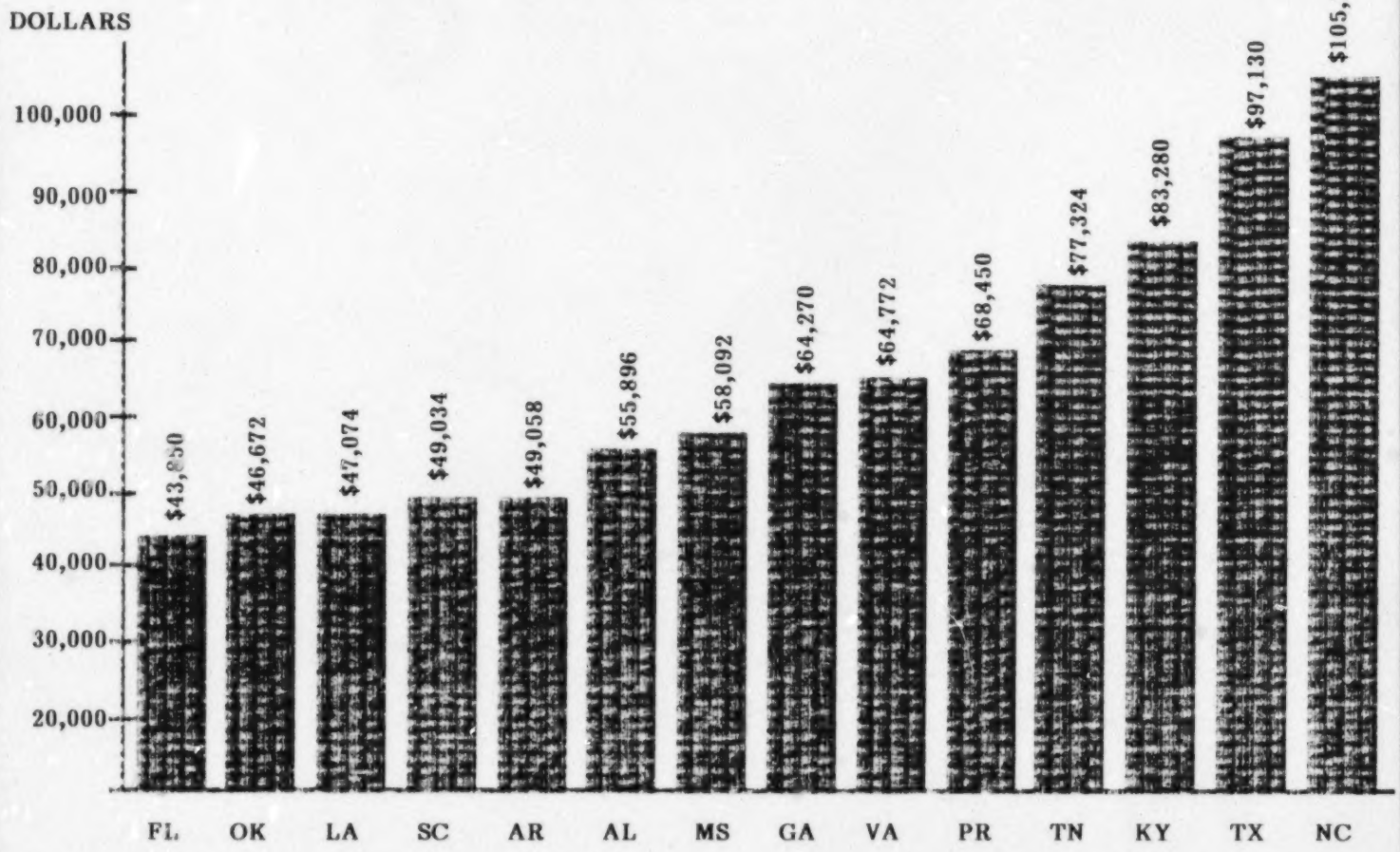
Although rural development constitutes one of the major program thrusts of the Agricultural Experiment Station, it has never received the funding support enjoyed by other subject matter areas. In 1970, a report prepared by the President's Task Force on Rural Development — "A New Life for the Country" — argued for a concerted effort by the USDA and State Agricultural Experiment Stations to augment Hatch Act funding for human resources and rural development research. At that time, only 1.5 percent of Experiment Station research dollars were being earmarked for these program areas. Despite their recommendation, support increased to only 4.5 percent by 1979 (Nelson, 1980, p. 26).

The passage of the Rural Development Act of 1972 was designed to demonstrate a commitment by the Federal government to the effective research and extension programs at state institutions of higher education. Funding authorization for Title V was placed at $10 million for FY 74, $15 million for FY 75, and $20 million for FY 76. However, actual funding fell far short of the $45 million authorized, with appropriations barely totalling $9 million for the three-year period (FY 74 through FY 76). One-half of the annual $3 million budget was dedicated to rural development research (Nelson, 1980). As Figure 1 shows, Title V provided limited funding for rural development initiatives in the South. Only North Carolina received a combined research/extension allocation in excess of $100,000 (Madden, 1977, p. 60).

As a result of the 1981 Agricultural Appropriations Act, the $1.5 million annual appropriation for Title V Rural Development Research was folded into the general Hatch appropriation to state agricultural experiment stations. It was the intent of the Congress that these monies be earmarked for RD research at the land-grant schools (Brown, 1982, p. 275).

FIGURE 1

ANNUAL ALLOCATION TO SOUTHERN STATES UNDER TITLE V OF THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1972 FOR RESEARCH AND EXTENSION EFFORTS *



*Adapted from Madden (1977)

Recent estimates prepared by Brown (1982, p. 276) indicate that total Hatch expenditures by 1862 institutions for rural development research approached $6.5 million in FY 81 including the $1.5 million Title V appropriations. About $2 million of those funds supported rural development research in the South. While the $6.5 million figure signaled an increase in Hatch support for RD efforts, it still constituted less than 5 percent of the total Hatch dollars funneled to state agricultural experiment stations. USDA outlays for RD and small farm social science research at 1890 land-grant universities were approximately $3.6 million in FY 80, the most recent date for which figures are available. This represents some 20 percent of all USDA supported research in the 1890 schools (Brown, 1982, p. 277).

Rural Development Research in the South: Past and Present

A simplified taxonomy of rural development research can help analyze the nature of Southern rural development research initiatives in recent years. Table 1 classifies rural development research at Southern land-grant institutions into four major groupings: community facilities and services, human resources development, economic development, and environmental improvement.

Primary emphasis was placed on human resources development research ("people building") in these two years. In fiscal 1973, 102 research projects (52.6 percent) were active in the human resources development area. By 1977, the number had slipped to 89 projects, but still represented almost 45 percent of all RD research activities conducted at experiment stations at that time. While the proportion of projects dedicated to community facilities and services and economic development was approximately the same for these two years, significant changes occurred within the environmental improvement sector. Only one Southern land-grant project was classi-

Table 1. Summary of Rural Development Research at 1862 and 1890 Land-Grant Institutions in the South, by Subject Matter Area, Fiscal Years 1973 and 1977.

SUBJECT MATTER AREA	FY1973 *		FY1977 **	
	No. of Projects	%	No. of Projects	%
Community Facilities and Services.....	41	21.1	40	20.2
Human Resources Development.....	102	52.6	89	44.9
Economic Development.....	50	25.8	55	27.8
Environmental Improvement...	1	0.5	14	7.1
TOTAL.....	194	100.0	198	100.0

*Adapted from Tyner (1974)

**Adapted from the Southern Rural Development Center Series Publication No.2 (January 1977)

fied as related to environmental improvement in FY 73. This number increased to 14 by FY 77. Clearly the need to examine land use, zoning, conservation and recreation issues had come to be recognized by Southern Experiment Station Administrators.

While a similar taxonomy is not available on current land-grant rural development research activities in the South, an extensive listing of rural development research initiatives of 1862 land-grant institutions was recently prepared by Brown (1982). Table 2 presents the grouping of Southern experiment station RD projects by the ten subject matter areas established by Brown. A wide range of topics were being researched. Substantial investments (relatively speaking) were dedicated to economic development, family/youth, natural resources/recreation, population, and small farms research initiatives.

It is important to note that the taxonomies outlined in Tables 1 and 2 suggest a homogeneity in RD research activities. However, the "Human Resources Development" area includes research on human development, welfare, health and nutrition, demography, household decision-making, community decision-making, and level/quality of life. Research efforts subsumed under the other key subject matter areas are similarly heterogenous.

Thus, RD research in the Southern land-grant system encompasses a wide variety of research issues. In fact, it tends to be a residual category that includes rural sociology research, a good amount of home economics research, and other things that do not fit under "agriculture." It is also characterized by small, almost marginal, commitments of a few people to several projects resulting in fragmentation and the lack of a "critical mass." Indeed, this is probably its most serious weakness. From this point of view, it may be remarkable that so much has been accomplished.

Table 2. Summary of Regular and Regional Hatch Supported Rural Development Research Projects at 1862 Land-Grant Institutions in the South, by Subject Matter Area, Fiscal Year 1981 *

SUBJECT MATTTER AREA	PROJECTS		DOLLARS	
	No.	%	Amount (in thousands)	%
Population	11	8.7	252.4	12.4
Economic Development	25	19.8	393.1	19.3
Socioeconomic Indicators	4	3.2	119.8	5.9
Community	10	7.9	150.5	7.4
Health/Education	4	3.2	73.9	3.6
Housing	9	7.1	97.9	4.8
Family/Youth	17	13.5	355.4	17.4
Services/Facilities	5	4.0	69.7	3.4
Natural Resources/ Recreation	23	18.3	287.2	14.1
Small Farms	18	14.3	238.6	11.7
TOTAL	126	100.0	2038.5	100.0

*Adapted from Brown (1982)

SELECTED RURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In spite of limited funding and a diversity of research activities by a small number of people, significant contributions have been made by rural development researchers.[2] Some of the general areas in which rural development research has, in our opinion, proved most productive are discussed in this section. The intent is not to be all encompassing, but simply to provide a flavor of the important research activities that have been achieved in the rural development area.

Documenting Rural Conditions

A basic requirement for rural development research is to document what is happening to rural localities and to people residing in these areas. Rural development and related research has made impressive contributions to this subject. While it is impossible to pay tribute to the countless individuals who have expanded our understanding of this research area, the work performed by Calvin Beale of the Economic Development Division, Economic Research Service, USDA is particularly noteworthy. Mr. Beale has spent a lifetime documenting changing conditions in rural America (i.e., Beale, 1975; 1978). He was, of course, the first to document and to analyze the "turnaround" in rural-urban migration exchanges. Most of his work has been done in cooperation with social scientists in state experiment stations, including some in the South.

Other examples of significant research efforts that have been designed to document rural conditions include those of Deavers and Brown (1979) and EDD-ERS-USDA (1971), which focus on economic and social trends in the rural

---

[2]See Southern Rural Development Center (1981) for additional documentation of rural development research accomplishments.

U.S., the important series of studies prepared in the late 1960's on poverty in rural America (President's National Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty, 1967), and the large edited work by Hawley and Mazie (1981) that examines income status of farmers, farm families, and rural people in general. The 1890 land-grant institutions have had, and continue to have, an active research program dedicated to the documentation of rural poverty in the South and the exploration of its causes and consequences (i.e., 1890 Regional Research Project RR-1).

While the need to document changing rural conditions appears obvious, in reality such research has always suffered from lack of support. Larson (1981, p. 178) alludes to a history of political opposition in USDA to social and economic research documenting rural conditions, opposition that contributed, in part, to the demise of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and to the often unwelcome status in USDA of rural sociologists actively involved in detailing those conditions. On a less dramatic level, adequate attention has never been paid to securing accurate data on small rural populations (Subcommittee on Agricultural Research and General Legislation, 1978, p. 1-20). In fact, we know less about rural America today than we did in the late 1930's and early 1940's. Moreover, the limited statistical data currently available on rural areas are being jeopardized by two key factors: (1) over-regulation of social science research by the Federal government; and (2) imposition of budget cuts in major data gathering government agencies, such as the Bureau of the Census.

Rural Industrialization and Job Development

Obtaining industry has been an important component of rural development activity since the "pilot county program" era of the late 1950's. This has led in recent years to a variety of research contributions dealing with dif-

ferent aspects of rural industrialization. Research has been performed on types of communities that successfully recruit industry, and what rural areas can do in order to realize industrial growth (Smith and Klindt, 1981; Smith et al., 1980). Important research has been carried out on the impacts of rural industrialization on rural communities, from distributional effects upon community income, to social impacts, to resulting service demands and fiscal effects on local governments (Summers et al., 1976; Shaffer and Tweeten, 1974; Darling, 1976). Perhaps one of the most exciting recent outcomes of this research effort has been the development of models which can assist community leaders to anticipate the probable impacts of obtaining a particular type of industry upon their community (Woods and Doeksen, 1982; ECOP, 1982; Clayton and Whittington, 1977). With the computer (even the microcomputer in some cases) it is now possible for social scientists to work directly with community leaders to analyze a variety of growth and development scenarios based upon accepted multipliers and other impact parameters.

Community Services and Local Government Finance

Rural development researchers, especially agricultural economists, have for years contributed to the analysis of rural community services, local government operations and finance. The call for this type of research has increased rapidly as the demands on local governments for expanded public services have intensified. While community services research remains complex and multi-faceted (Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, U.S. Senate, 1977), important research achievements have already been realized on the costs of and demands for community services, economies of scale in the provision of local services, and alternatives for the financing of such services (Fox, 1980; Ziegler et al., 1980).

One particularly promising area of research is the "Local Decisions Project" being conducted at Oklahoma State University in cooperation with EDD-ERS-USDA (Nelson and Kuehn, 1982). Building upon a long tradition among rural development researchers of assisting local governments on community service decisions, Dr. Gerald Doeksen has systematically pursued the development of readily usable community service budgets and other analytic tools required by local communities in making decisions about the establishment and financing of community services. Although the work is formally in the Cooperative Extension Service, functionally it has represented a successful marriage of research and action.[3]

Community Development Process

If the essence of rural development is, as Copp (1972) suggests, people in rural communities working together to improve their living situation, then rural development and the (rural) community development process mean virtually the same thing. A perusal of any standard definition of community development will confirm this (Christenson and Robinson, 1980). The core of rural development, then, has to do with the "capacity" of rural communities, their people, and their governments to meet the challenges that confront them. There has been a recent revival of interest in the capacity of local governments, under the rubric of "capacity building" (Grosenick, 1977; Carter, 1979; Honadle, 1982) and the field of community development has always been concerned with the capacity of local communities — of both its private and public sectors.

Research in a variety of contexts has confirmed the importance of an

---

[3]Significantly, some of the community service budgets in great demand relate to health and health related services, an important area of research in its own right, and an area of concern to many rural people.

"essential process" (Madden, 1977) that involves people (both leaders and the public) in rural development if it is to be successful. This is, in many respects, a uniquely American idea. Ironically, some of the most extensive current research relating to its applicability comes from the field of international development (Whyte, 1981; Cornell University, 1979). There is, however, a continuing tradition of research on community decision-making in rural communities (i.e., Southern Regional Research Project S-120) and on community leadership. Harold Kaufman of Mississippi State University and Harold Nix of the University of Georgia, both long-time scholars and practitioners of community development, have made very important contributions to this area.

Unfortunately, the findings from community development research that can actually be applied are not numerous. Indeed, this area of research seems plagued by inability to articulate research and practice effectively. Anecdotal and case study evidence abounds, however, to support the contention of Kepner:

> . . . Perhaps the most significant attainment to date is one which is least susceptible to objective assessment. That is the discovery (or rediscovery) that when all interests of any area join together in an organized way in a common cause, accomplishments which the skeptics would say were impossible become realities. (Kepner, as quoted in Nelson, 1980, p. 7)

Small Farms

This is an area that many would not include in a consideration of rural development. However, research directed at small farms in the United States is intimately related to rural development because it is directed at improving the quality of life, income potential, and available options of a large segment of rural America.

A substantial amount of small farm related research has been conducted and continues to be performed in land-grant institutions. Activities include

evaluations of special assistance programs for small farmers (Harrold, 1975; Ladewig and Edmonson, 1972; Myer, 1976; Orden et al., 1980), specialized research on the rural development implications of small farms (Smith et al., 1980), and surveys describing characteristics and needs of small farm operators (Huffman and Donald, 1981; Van Es et al., 1982; Hoiberg, 1978; Crecink, 1979; Salant, 1982). A comprehensive study in this latter area is being currently undertaken by 1890 land-grant institutions and two cooperating 1862 land-grant schools under the Southern Regional Research Program RR-2.

It seems especially important to note that researchers are almost unanimous on the point that relatively inexpensive small farm assistance programs are highly cost-effective, resulting in significant enhancements of income and quality of life for participants (Roberts, 1982). This belies the usual assumption that small farms, because of the impediments they face in a dynamic agricultural economy and the small amount of agricultural products they produce, should be treated as welfare problems.

Studies of Rural Youth and Youth in Agriculture

There is a strong tradition of regional research in the South dealing with the aspirations and attainment of rural youth and Southern land-grant college students, including 1862 and 1890 institutions. This research has been associated with Regional Research Project S-114 and its predecessor projects. Although this research might not appear to relate to rural development, local community leaders almost always identify improvement of educational and employment opportunities for their young people as an objective of rural development programs. In the late 1950's many of the pilot rural development counties became involved in projects specifically to improve educational and employment opportunities, hoping that this would encourage their young people to remain in the community.

Needs Assessment

One of the principal objectives associated with the Title V section of the 1977 Rural Development Act was "to develop and provide the best scientific, technical, economic, organization, environmental, and management information relating to effective development in rural America" (U.S. Senate, 1973). In general, Title V served as an important conduit to the strengthening of the rural development research/extension tie. One research area that "came of age" in the era of Title V was "needs assessment." From its very inception, needs assessment was designed to provide decision makers with quality information on the perceived needs of local citizens.

Southern land-grant scientists have taken an active part in responding to the information needs of community decision makers. Through the application of scientific survey techniques, rural development researchers have secured a wealth of data for use by local leaders, planners and policy makers in meeting the expressed needs of local residents. Because of the large number of community-specific needs assessment studies completed, it is impossible to give them adequate treatment at this time. However, it is important to note these legitimate and fruitful activities of the land-grant system.

On a broader scale, statewide needs assessment studies have been successfully carried out by land-grant researchers in Florida, Kentucky and North Carolina (Beaulieu and Korsching, 1979; Warner et al., 1976; Christenson, 1973, 1975-1976). Because of the close partnership established with key individuals and agencies during the initial stages of these studies, the information gathered via the statewide surveys have been of optimal use to state agencies, legislative bodies, regional/state planning groups, county governments, and Cooperative Extension personnel.

It seems apparent that as we move into the 1980's, the demand for needs assessment will intensify. A recent document prepared by the Office of Rural Development Policy (1982, p. 20) states that local governments will be asked to take on an expanded role in initiating and managing rural development. The success of their efforts will be dependent, in part, upon the Land grant system's ability to deliver the type of technical assistance needed. We would argue that the established successes of rural development researchers in the needs assessment arena make them particularly well suited to meet this challenge.

EMERGING RURAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Anticipating the future is risky, but essential. This section will examine specific RD issue priorities from the perspective of the researcher and the public and directions that are important to the success of future rural development research.

Rural Development Research Priorities

The factors which influence the rural development research agenda of a land-grant scientist are generally diverse. In some cases, the issues selected for investigation reflect a person's professional training, the expectations of the institution that employs him, and/or the researcher's perceptions of his discipline's major concerns (Pigg, 1977; Brown, 1982). At other times, the research topics mirror the expressed concerns of rural residents of the state. While it is impossible for us to accurately enumerate the RD research priorities of each Southern land-grant institution, or to specify the research topics that parallel the scientist's professional training, information does exist on the rural development priorities of local citizens and of those actively involved in Southern rural development research.

Rural development concerns of selected Southern researchers were recently articulated in a study conducted by Linder (not dated). Employing a two-stage delphi conference technique, researchers were asked to list five to ten rural development research issues which they felt were of critical importance for the 1980's. These responses were subsequently synthesized and included in a second mailing to rural development researchers. Instructions were to place the slate of research items in priority order, from most important to least important. Table 3 reports the results of

Table 3. Rural Development Research Priorities of Southern Researchers (n=104)

RESEARCH ISSUE	RANKING
Impact of Growth and Development on the Demand for and Costs of Services	1
Water Resources	2
Health Care	3
Impact of Energy Shortages and Inflation	4
Rural Labor Market	5
Land Use Planning and Zoning	6
Local and Intergovernmental Financing	7
Educational Systems and Institutions	8
Level of Living and Quality of Life	9
Preservation of Farmland	10
Rural Elderly	11
Technology for Small Farms	12
Evaluation of Rural Development Programs	13
Manpower Development	14
Human Development	15
Transportation and Communication	16
Community Decision Making	17
Local Government Operations	18
Inequality in Rural Areas	19
Rural Crime	20
Demography	21

Source: William W. Linder, "The ecstasy and the agony of rural development." Unpublished paper (not dated).

Linder's study.

The five areas that emerged as the key research issues in the South were: (1) impact of growth and development of the demand for and costs of services, (2) water resources, (3) health care, (4) impact of energy shortages and inflation, and (5) rural labor market. Nonetheless, in light of the procedures employed by Linder, it is fair to say that the 21 items included in Table 3 are all reflective of the research topics deemed important by rural development scientists in the South.[4]

It is an axiom of the land-grant system that research should respond to real needs "in the field," and the very definition of rural development requires attention to "felt needs." What then are the priorities of rural people? Regretably, Southern regional data of this nature are nonexistent. However, statewide studies carried out in North Carolina and Florida represent good examples of how scientific assessments of local concerns can prove instrumental in the selection of research projects having high correspondence with the identified needs of rural residents.

Despite the fact that the North Carolina study was conducted in 1973 and Florida's in 1978, there is much consistency in the type of problems identified by the two surveys. For example, both single out drug use, street and road conditions, adequate medical personnel, recreation for youth, and special education for retarded and handicapped citizens, as priority concerns of local residents. In addition, some concerns expressed by North Carolina and Florida respondents serve to reaffirm the importance of research issues outlined by participants in Linder's study. While their problems are locality specific in nature, they do relate to broader research topics such as

---

[4]Only research topics that received 15 or more mentions in the first wave of Linder's study were included in the second survey mailed to RD researchers. Thus, Table 3 represents a rank offering of the major RD research issues identified in the first survey.

health care, land use planning and zoning, educational systems and institutions, and demand for and costs of services.

A survey performed in four counties of Arkansas in 1975 determined the general public's priorities for expenditures at the county level. Both local leaders and the general public were surveyed. The items which received the greatest support were quite consistent with the results uncovered in the North Carolina and Florida statewide surveys. Rural Arkansas residents were most concerned with adequate medical services, rural roads, rural beautification, and employment opportunities, all of which are legitimate objectives of rural development programming and research.

The key point to be deduced from this discussion is that the land-grant scientist's rural development research agenda in the years ahead must show balance between the research topics of major importance to his discipline and the critical concerns voiced by clientele at the local level.

Important New Research Directions

(1) Collaborative Research

One desirable trend that is essential to the success of rural development is collaborative research, involving cooperation and coordination among different disciplines, among 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions, and among extension and research faculty. The Southern Rural Sociology Research Committee (SRSRC) has proved instrumental in fostering collaborative activities among 1862 and 1890 researchers. While Title V of the 1972 Rural Development Act served as the initial stimulus for joint work among research and extension personnel, the recent incorporation of funds into the regular formula funds has tended to weaken that linkage. Despite this, the future dictates a need for closer collaboration between the rural development research and

extension functions of the land-grant system.

(2) Evaluation and Estimation of Program Impacts

There is little evaluative research that measures the impact of rural development activities (Alexander, 1971; Madden, 1977). As accountability becomes of paramount concern, research of this kind must be performed. Research should focus upon the overall impacts of rural development activity and upon an analysis of alternative strategies for achieving rural development. The research will be inherently difficult since rural development is not something upon which experiments can be performed. However, with the significant developments in evaluative research techniques over the last 20 years, it is almost certain that evaluative research on rural development will become a reality.

(3) Implications of the "New Federalism"

The "New Federalism" concept of turning over greater responsibility to local communities has very important implications for rural development. First, it places greater demands upon local governments and local communities. Assistance previously available from more centralized Federal agencies has declined. This imposes greater demands upon the USDA RD delivery system. Second, rural development will have to minimize its financial assistance strategy and strengthen its strategy of self-help (for which community development skills will be needed), much in the pattern used by the Cooperative Extension Service in the late 1950's and early 1960's. Third, greater local autonomy will require the land-grant system to be more sensitive and responsive to local clientele needs. It has been shown that rural development practice is capable of effectively responding to such needs (Madden, 1977), and additional rural development research in these areas should make it even more so.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Significant progress has been made in rural development research during the 1970's, as is illustrated by important contributions in the documentation of rural conditions, in research on rural industrialization, community services, local government finance, community development process, and on small farms, to name just a few. These contributions indicate that a degree of maturity has been reached in rural development research. The South has contributed significantly to the progress that has been made in these areas.

Rural development and rural development research are uniquely qualified, in both their structure and focus, to make contributions in a new environment of greater local autonomy and self-reliance. The land-grant system was "federalism" before it became "new." Rural development practice and research both focus upon assisting local communities in decision making and in the delivery of services. In this respect, they parallel the New Federalism concept. They constitute a resource of expertise available to help local communities meet their own objectives.

Rural development still suffers from fragmentation and isolation, especially in the South where few institutions have enough RD staff to create the critical mass required for an effective research program. Several aspects of this fragmentation can be identified; isolation of disciplines involved in rural development research, isolation of research from action, isolation of researchers from one another, isolation among institutions, especially between 1890 and 1862 institutions, isolation of rural development from production agriculture and, finally, the tendency for researchers to be involved marginally in many projects, without having the time available to make a decisive commitment to any one.

There is a trend toward more collaborative research, evidenced espe-

cially by new 1862-1890 coordination, and greater multi-disciplinary cooperation. Research-extension collaboration in rural development, strongly fostered by Title V of the Rural Development Act of 1972, may decline since Title V resources have been folded into regular Hatch funds. The Southern Rural Development Center has contributed to the nurturing of regional, multi-disciplinary, and extension-research collaboration in the Southern region. Also, the cooperative regional research structure, in the Southern experiment stations has stimulated and supported collaborative research. It is essential that these mechanisms for cooperative research be retained and strengthened since it is only in this way that the very thin rural development research capability of the South can meet the demands placed upon it.

In view of the integral nature of rural development to the Department of Agriculture and its cooperating agencies, it is also important that a greater collaborative relationship be developed between RD and agricultural research. To a degree this has occurred in the area of small farm research. More collaboration is required, however, to examine such things as the effects of change in commercial agriculture upon the community and of the change in the community upon commercial agriculture. Many other examples of potential interdependence could be given.

It is essential that adequate resources be available to the entire rural development research establishment, as well as to the Bureau of the Census and other data gathering agencies, to maintain an accurate and useful data base on rural America. As we pointed out above, we know much less about rural America now than we did in the 1930's and 1940's, and much less than we know about urban America. Moreover, unless a renewed commitment to RD research is forthcoming, future progress in RD research will be severely hampered. With less than 5 percent of the Agricultural Experiment Station

resources being devoted to a very heterogenous rural development research program, it will be difficult to maintain a viable rural development research effort in the years ahead. It is critical that dollar and manpower support be expanded so that rural development can maintain an active partnership in the mission of the USDA/Land-Grant System and so that a critical mass can be brought to bear upon RD issues.

Finally, it is important that past and present rural development initiatives or strategies be evaluated dispassionately so that we may determine what works and what does not. In sharp contrast to urban development programs and agricultural research and extension investments, very little evaluative research has been performed on rural development.

REFERENCES

Alexander, Frank D., A Study of Extension Community Resource Development Programs in Eight Multi-County Areas, (Washington, D.C.: Extension Service, USDA, 1971).

Beale, Calvin L., "People on the Land," Rural U.S.A.: Persistence and Change, ed. Dr. Thomas R. Ford, (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1978).

-----, The Revival of Population Growth in Nonmetropolitan America, ERS-605, (Washington, D.C.: Economics, Statistics, and Cooperative Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1975).

Brown, David L., "Rural Development in the Land-Grant University System," The Rural Sociologist, (September, 1982). pp. 274-281.

Carter, Jimmy, Small Community and Rural Development Policy, (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 1979).

Christenson, James A., North Carolina Today and Tomorrow, Publications 141-149, (Raleigh, NC: Agricultural Extension Service, 1975-76).

-----, Through Our Eyes: People's Needs and Goals in North Carolina, Publication 106, (Raleigh, NC: Agricultural Extension Service, 1973).

Clayton, Kenneth C., and David Whittington, "The Economics of Community Growth: An Impact Model," Southern Journal of Agricultural Economics, (July, 1977). pp. 63-69.

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, United States Senate National Conference on Nonmetropolitan Community Services Research — Proceedings, Conference held at Ohio State University, January 11-13, 1977, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977).

Community Development in America, eds. James A. Christenson and Jerry W. Robinson, Jr., (Ames Iowa: The Iowa State University Press, 1980).

Copp, James H., "Rural Sociology and Rural Development," Rural Sociology, (December, 1972). pp. 515-533.

Crecink, John C., Characteristics of Small Farm Families, Agricultural Outlook 1980, Session 9, (Washington, D.C.: ERS-USDA, 1979).

Darling, David L., Jr., "Fiscal Impact of New Residential Development on Communities," Journal of the Community Development Society, (Spring, 1976). pp. 40-47.

Deavers, Kenneth L. and David L. Brown, Social and Economic Trends in Rural America, Prepared by EDD-ESCS-USDA, (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 1979).

Dunkelberger, John E., and Janice B. Vanlandingham, Reflections on the Development of Cooperative Rural Sociology Research in the South, Rural Sociology Series No. 1, (Auburn, AL: Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, April, 1974).

The Economic and Social Condition of Rural America in the 1970's, Prepared by EDD-ERS-USDA for the Committee on Government Operations, U.S. Senate, Ninety-Second Congress, First Session, Part 1, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971).

Focus on Florida: The Citizens' Viewpoint, eds. Lionel J. Beaulieu and Peter F. Korsching, Special Series No. 1, (Gainesville, FL: Center for Community and Rural Development, University of Florida, May, 1979).

Fox, William F., Size Economics in Local Government Services: A Review, Rural Development Research Report No. 22, (Washington, D.C.: ESCS-USDA, 1980).

Grosenick, Leigh E., "Grass Roots Capacity Building and the Intergovernmental System," Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, United States Senate, National Conference on Nonmetropolitan Community Services Research, Conference held at Ohio State University January 11-13, 1977, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977).

Guide to the Rural Development Act of 1972, Ninety-third Congress, 1st Session, Committee Print, Subcommittee on Agriculture and Forestry, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973).

Harrold, Van R., An Evaluation of the Missouri Small Farm Development Program Using a Control Group, M.S. Thesis, (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri, 1975).

Hawley, Amos S., and Sara M. Mazie, Nonmetropolitan America in Transition, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1981).

Hoiberg, Eric O., Iowa Family Farm Study, (Ames Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1978).

Honadle, Beth Walter, Managing Capacity-Building: Problems and Approaches, Journal of the Community Development Society, Volume 13, (1982). pp. 65-73.

How Extension Can Help Communities Conduct Impact Analysis, Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, Publication IM-E, (Madison, WI: Department of Agricultural Journalism, January 4, 1982).

Huffman, Donald E., and Samuel Lee Donald, Socio-Economic Characteristics and Income Opportunities of Small Farms in Selected Areas of Louisiana, (Baton Rouge, LA: Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness, Louisiana State University, 1981).

Kepner, P.V., "How Rural Development Operates," Farm Policy Forum, Volume II, No. 1, (Ames Iowa: The Iowa State College Press, Summer, 1958).

Ladewig, H.W., and V.W. Edmonson, The Effectiveness of Non-Professionals in Cooperative Extension Education for Low-Income Farmers, (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University, 1972).

Linder, William W., The Ecstasy and the Agony of Rural Development: Implications for Research, Unpublished paper, n.d.

Larson, Olaf F., "Agriculture and the Community," Nonmetropolitan America in Transition, eds. Amos H. Hawley and Sara M. Mazie, (Chapel Hill, NC: North Carolina University Press, 1981). pp. 147-193.

Madden, J. Patrick, Rural Development and the Land-Grant University: An Evaluation of the Title V of the Rural Development Act of 1972, (Pennsylvania State University and the National Rural Center, October, 1977).

Meyer, Gordon L., The Missouri Small Farm Program: An Analytical Evaluation, Ph.D. Dissertation, (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri, 1976).

Nelson, Donald L., "Silver Threads Among the Gold: The First 25 Years of Community and Rural Development Programs," Joint Planning and Evaluation Staff Papers Series Number 80-PPS-08, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture, November, 1980).

Nelson, Marlys, and John A. Kuehn, Evaluation of the Local Decision Project, Staff Report No. AGES 820729, (Washington, D.C.: USDA-ERS-EDD, August, 1982).

A New Life for the Country, President's Task Force on Rural Development, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970).

Orden, David, S.T. Buccola and P.K. Edwards, Cooperative Extension Small Farm Programs in the South: An Inventory and Evaluation," (Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Polytechnic and State University, 1980).

Pigg, Kenneth E., "The Lack of Correspondence of Social Research to Field Situations," Rural Development Research in Sociology: Where Do We Go From Here? Series Publication No. 19, (Starkville, MS: Southern Rural Development Center, August, 1977).

Roberts, D. Trent, Ex Ante Evaluation of a Small Farm Program, Unpublished Thesis, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, University of Arkansas, 1982.

Rural Development Research in Land-Grant Institutions in the South, Southern Rural Development Center, Series Publication No. 2, (Starkville, MS: Southern Rural Development Center, January, 1977).

Rural Poverty in the United States, President's National Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967).

Rural Research in USDA, Subcommittee on Agricultural Research and General Legislation, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Agricultural Research and General Legislation of the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, United States Senate, Ninety-Fifth Congress, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978).

Salant, Priscilla, Family Farms in Mississippi-Tennessee Sand Clay Hills: Survey Highlights, Staff Report No. AGES 8220412, (Washington, D.C.: ERS-USDA, 1982)

Shaffer, Ron E. and Luther G. Tweeten, Economic Changes From Industrial Development in Eastern Oklahoma, Bulletin 715, (Stillwater, OK: Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station, 1974).

Smith, Eldon D., Brady J. Deaton, and David R. Kelch, "Location Determinants of Manufacturing Industry in Rural Areas," Southern Journal of Agricultural Economics, (1980). pp. 23-31.

Smith, Eldon D., Harry H. Hall, and Don Simon, Potential Effect of Small Farm Technical Assistance Programs on Public Revenue Accounts, (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky, Department of Agricultural Economics, 1980).

Smith Eldon D. and Thomas H. Klindt, Industrial Location and Growth in Submetro Tennessee and Kentucky Communities, Tennessee Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin No. 258, (Knoxville, TN: Tennessee Agricultural Experiment Station, 1981).

Southern Rural Development Center Progress Report, Southern Rural Development Center, (Starkville, MS: Southern Rural Development Center, 1974-81).

Summers, Gene F., Sharon D. Evans, Frank Clemente, E.M. Beck and Jon Minkoff, Industrial Invasion of Non-Metropolitan America: A Quarter Century of Experience, (New York: Praeger Publishers, Inc., 1976).

Tyner, Fred H. (chairman), Research Needs in Rural Development, Report of the Southern Regional Rural Development Task Force, (July, 1974).

Van Es, J.C., F.C. Fliegel, C. Erickson, H. Backus, and E. Harper, Choosing the Best of Two Worlds: Small Part-Time Farms in Illinois, Research Report No. 185, (Urbana-Champaign, IL: Department of Agricultural Economics, 1982).

Warner, P.D., R.J. Burdge, S.D. Hoffman, and G.R. Hammonds, Issues Facing Kentucky, Volumes 1-18, (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, 1976).

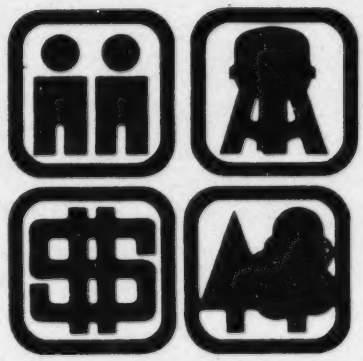
Whyte, William F., "Participatory Approaches to Agricultural Research and Development," Rural Development Participation Review, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1981). pp. 1-6.

Woods, Mike D., and Gerald A. Doeksen, Community Level Impact Assessment — Extension Applications, Paper presented at the annual meetings of the Community Development Society, August 8-12, 1982, (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University, 1982).

Working Toward a National Rural Development Strategy: A Progress Report, Office of Rural Development Policy, USDA, (Washington, D.C.: USDA, 1982).

Ziegler, Joseph A., J. Martin Redfern, Carl Farler and Anita Keller, An Analysis of County Finances and County Finance Alternatives in Arkansas, Bulletin No. 846, (Fayetteville, AK: Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station, August, 1980).

The SRDC is one of four regional rural development centers in the nation. It coordinates cooperation between the Research (Experiment Station) and Extension (Cooperative Extension Service) staffs at land-grant institutions in the South to provide technical consultation, research, training, and evaluation services for rural development. This publication is one of several published by the Center on various needs, program thrusts, and research efforts in rural development. For more information about SRDC activities and publications, write to the Director.



Southern Rural Development Center
Box 5406
Mississippi State, MS 39762

The Southern Rural Development Center is an Equal Opportunity Organization providing research, educational information, and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, sex or national origin. SRDC is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

SRDC Series 65

January 1984